



Kirkby High School

Attendance Policy

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I. Aims

Kirkby High School is committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

As a school, our attendance target is for all students to aim for a minimum of 96%.

Kirkby High School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all students. On the basis of equal opportunities, we will take measures to encourage regular and punctual attendance at school, and in all lessons. We believe our students have a right to education and to do this they require continuity and progression in their learning. Consistent attendance is an essential foundation in order to achieve potential.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career, and as a school we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems that affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents, students and relevant support agencies to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.

Purposes of the policy

- To ensure all stakeholders understand the importance of good attendance and the impact this can have on academic achievement
- To foster strong home-school links, ensuring that both school and home fully support a child in aiming for 100% attendance to school
- To ensure all students achieve a minimum of 96% attendance
- To create an ethos within school where good attendance and punctuality are considered the norm, and is valued by all stakeholders
- To promote a positive, welcoming and supportive atmosphere
- To outline all stakeholder responsibilities for ensuring good, regular student attendance

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010, 2011, 2013, 2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

By law, all children of compulsory school age must get a suitable, full-time education. It is the parent/ carer's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school both regularly and punctually, in line with the 1996 Education Act.

As a school, we are responsible by law to record attendance under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, and to therefore report poor attendance to the Local Authority if a parent/ carer fails to ensure that their child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without the parent/ carer's knowledge. The Local Authority may take one of the following courses of action:

- issuing of an Education Penalty Notice
- a fine of up to £2,500
- a parenting order
- a prison sentence

3. Statutory duty of parents:

In section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, it specifies that parents or carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that students of compulsory school age are educated, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Otherwise may include, but is not limited to, special units, hospitals, education at home by a parent, a private tutor or further education colleges.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines a parent as:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

Parents should be aware that even though they may not live at the same house as the child, they are still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

As long as a parent can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and suitable for the child's needs, the law allows parents to choose the alternative options up to the child's specified leaving date.

4. Roles and responsibilities for attendance

In order to maximise a child's potential, it is crucial that all stakeholders work collaboratively. In order to achieve this, we expect that:

Parents will:

- familiarise themselves with the School Attendance Policy
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually, aiming for a minimum of 96% attendance
- contact school on the first day of their child's absence, and maintain daily contact should the absence continue
- provide a reason for their child's absence
- support regular attendance by requesting medical appointments are made outside school hours; however, if this is not possible an appointment card must be provided to support their child's attendance. If an appointment is made in the school day, student should attend school before leaving to go the appointment.
- be proactive in contacting school where attendance issues develop, allowing for early identification and solutions to be put in place to support
- engage in any school intervention offered, such as attending meetings and the signing of attendance contracts in order to continue the collaborative approach to improving their child's attendance

Students will:

- attend school on time each day
- meet or exceed our whole-school target of a minimum of 96% attendance
- speak to parents/ carers /teachers if issues arise that may have an effect on attendance in order for school and home to resolve these
- cooperate and engage fully in support and intervention offered by school
- arrive to school appropriately prepared for the day

School staff will:

- create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere
- ensure those students returning following a period of absence are supported
- provide a quality education
- promote the importance of good attendance and celebrate achievements
- follow a clear and fully understood registration process, in accordance with statutory regulations
- record attendance regularly and accurately
- work in partnership with students, parents and carers to remove any barriers affecting a child's attendance
- communicate efficiently and effectively with parents when a student fails to attend school
- work with the appropriate agencies and Local Authority as per the DfE guidelines

Rewarding Attendance

As a school, we feel it is important to recognise and reward good and improving attendance and punctuality. To assist us all to focus on this, we will:

- promote a culture across school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- provide attendance rewards, such as post cards home, telephone calls, fast passes and prize draws
- celebrate improvements in attendance with students
- provide parents with attendance updates at regular intervals
- send regular letters home to reward 9% + attendance
- record weekly form group attendance on the attendance poster in the form room
- consult the student rewards working party to further develop our reward systems

Action on Poor Attendance

Poor attendance can be identified in a number of ways, such as Persistent Absence. The DfE classes a child as being persistently absent when their enrolment's overall absence equates to 10% or more of their possible sessions, which is around 3 sessions of absence per half-term.

As a school, we will apply a variety of interventions to tackle poor attendance, such as:

- Liaison between school leadership, Attendance Mentors and Attendance Officer to identify attendance issues
- Regular meetings between school leadership and the Attendance Team to discuss actions and student absence
- Home visits will be carried out as appropriate and telephone calls made home
- Meetings will be arranged where appropriate with students and parents/ carers to discuss student absences or poor attendance and to discuss steps to support and improve attendance
- The use of Attendance Contracts to be signed by parents/ carers, students and school
- Bespoke targets will be set for students who are persistently absent with no valid reason
- Attendance panels will be conducted to offer support and guidance, whilst creating a strong home-school link to improve student attendance
- Links with outside agencies will be established if appropriate
- Attendance warning letters will be sent to parents as per the School Attendance Strategy
- Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the Local Authority if a student's attendance fails to improve following intervention strategies implemented by school, which may lead to prosecution if attendance does not then improve

Attendance percentages and their impact on learning are defined as the following:

Descriptor	Attendance	Number of Days absent	Learning hours Lost per year
Outstanding	100%	0	0
Excellent	99%	2	10
	98%	4	20
Good	97%	6	30
	96%	8	40
Satisfactory	95%	10	50
Needs Improving	93%	14	70
Cause for Concern	Less than 92%	15	75

5. Understanding Types of Absence

In school, students are expected to attend for 190 days over an academic year. Every half day (= 1 session) has to be classified as either authorised or unauthorised, which is why it is crucial that school are informed as soon as possible about a student's absence.

Authorised absences are a missed session from school for a good reason, such as illness or medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time.

Unauthorised absences (codes O, U or G) are those which the school does not consider reasonable. It is the decision of the school, not the parents, regarding the authorisation of absence. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority beginning legal proceedings. Absences will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- parents/ carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- non agreement with a school sanction
- truancy
- an unacceptable reason is provided for absence
- shopping, birthdays or looking after other children
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- students who arrive after the school register has closed
- holidays – Kirkby High School, in line with current Government legislation, has a zero-tolerance approach to requests for leave of absence during term time and requests for a leave of absence for a holiday will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The final decision will be made by the Headteacher.

6. Leave of Absence

Taking leave or holidays during term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to support us by not taking your child away during school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to take time off in school for the purpose of a holiday. No holidays will be authorised in term time unless it is deemed as exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher. School makes it clear that it actively discourages the taking of holidays in term time, as this is detrimental to the continuity of a child's education.

All applications for leave must be made at least 3 weeks in advance in writing to the Headteacher. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 act makes it clear that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

When making the decision, the school will consider the individual circumstances of each application, including any previous pattern of leave, both current and historical attendance and the length of leave requested.

7. Responding to Non-Attendance

When a student does not attend school and there is no prior contact from home, parents/ carers can expect:

- a member of school staff to contact home on the first day of absence to make the parent/ carer aware the student is absent, ask for an explanation and log the parental response to determine the appropriate attendance code. If contact cannot be made in the morning, a second telephone call may be made or a home visit arranged by one of the school's attendance mentors
- the absence will be logged as 'unauthorised' should an acceptable reason not be provided
- school to follow all recommended statutory action, such as criminal proceedings in the case of persistent absenteeism

8. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when 10% or more schooling on an ongoing basis is missed for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing a considerable amount of damage to any student's educational prospects and we need parent's/ carer's full support and cooperation to tackle

this and support improvement.

9. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent, you must:

- contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence to inform school of the reason

If your child is absent, we:

- will contact you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you that day
- may arrange for a home visit to be made by our attendance mentors
- may invite you in to school and conduct an attendance meeting, involving the signing of an attendance contract should the absences persist, to work collaboratively to improve your child's attendance

10. Student Absences

In order to maintain our high expectations on attendance, school will actively support and seek guidance from the LA with regard to unauthorised absences and legal intervention. This will take the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), following guidance from the Local Authority.

School will contact parents/ carers to highlight school's concerns. As part of the school's monitoring of attendance and unauthorised absences, school reserves the right to mark as unauthorised any absence that is not satisfactorily evidenced.

If a student's attendance is below the school's expectations, they may be added to one of the attendance intervention groups, which could involve parental and/or student meetings to create a collaborative approach to support and assist in improving student attendance.

11. Student Punctuality

- Punctuality to school is logged on SIMS
- Any student arriving late to school will sign in via the attendance office
- Students arriving late to school will attend a break time detention on the same day
- Students must be punctual to all lessons, and any lateness will be recorded on SIMS. It is the class teacher's responsibility to deal with any lateness to their lesson

12. Use of Legal Interventions

In law, an offence occurs if a parent/ carer fails to secure a child's attendance at the school at which they are registered. Penalty notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or Section 36 of the Children Act 1989, to enforce attendance at school where possible.

Legal action in the courts may be used as a strategy to improve attendance when parents have failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Penalty Notices are a further option available to the Local Authority.

13. Pastoral and Safeguarding

At Kirkby High School, every child has the right to an education and to be safe and cared for in a way

that meets their individual needs. We recognise that all children need a safe and stable environment to enable them to flourish and achieve to the best of their abilities, away from anyone or anything that may cause them harm. To ensure this, we follow the school's Safeguarding policy. We respect all members of the school community and treat information with confidentiality. The Attendance Policy is served in conjunction with our role to safeguard all our students. It is important to note that extremely poor attendance may be classed as 'Educational Neglect', which could potentially form part of a referral to Children's Social Care for action and trigger further support from external agencies.

14. Students with extremely low attendance

It is the parent / carer's responsibility to encourage your child to attend school every day. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be due to issues in school, please contact school at the earliest opportunity to discuss this and enable school and home to work collaboratively to support the child to attend school.

15. Outside Referrals

The school cannot work in isolation. The partnership of school, parents and the LA is fundamental, with all involved accepting responsibility and working together to improve attendance for the benefit of the students and community. Prompt action on non-attendance and accurate and consistent registration are important areas of child protection.

16. Early Help

Early identification of needs and support required can prevent concerns escalating. Early help plans should have focused outcomes for children and families, and should be actively planned with them. Plans should deliver evidence based interventions, and clear thresholds for specific agency intervention, such as social care, housing and mental health services.

Areas of Vulnerability and Support

Possible issues that may lead to non-attendance are:

- Parentally condoned unjustified absence
- Unrecognised SEND barriers
- Abuse or neglect
- Student disaffection
- Inappropriate curriculum for a child
- Burdens of domestic responsibilities

Vulnerable Children

Children who are looked after (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) and who may have an Educational Healthcare Plan (EHC) will be treated with the highest priority and will be known to the attendance team. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home, liaising closely with the school's inclusion faculty. Any outside professionals who are also working with the children and family will also be notified of the absence. Children with SEND will be treated with a similar priority to ensure that their time in school can be maximised and their learning is supported.

Through the Inclusion Faculty, a bespoke approach will be used for students of different ages and needs.